

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8202

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 1649

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP HA
SUBJ: BAREFOOT IN THE CARIBBEAN, OR THE MARKET FOR SHOES IN HAITI

REF: STATE 078081

1. HAITI IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S POOREST NATIONS, THE MARKET FOR SHOES IS SMALL, AND EFFORTS TO PROMOTE INCREASED U.S. SHOE EXPORTS TO HAITI WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE. HAITI'S POPULATION OF 5-6 MILLION OVERSTATES THE MARKET AS AT LEAST 75 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION GO BAREFOOT OR AT THE MOST WEAR CRUDE SANDALS. MOST SALES TODAY INVOLVE CHEAP VINYL OR PLASTIC SANDALS AND SHOES. SOME MEDIUM QUALITY SHOES ARE AVAILABLE IN LOCAL MARKET BUT IMPORTS AND PRODUCTION PROBABLY DO NOT EXCEED 200,000 PAIRS PER YEAR. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH ENOUGH MONEY TO PURCHASE QUALITY SHOES PROBABLY DOESN'T EXCEED 100,000 AND MOST OF THEM BUY SHOES WHILE TRAVELING OVERSEAS. THERE IS A SMALL BUT STEADY MARKET FOR LOW COST TENNIS AND SPORT SHOES WHICH MAY AMOUNT TO ABOUT 250,000 PAIRS. MOST ARE MADE IN HAITI. THE SHOE AND SANDAL MARKET WAS SOMEWHAT LIVELIER A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO WHEN DR. DUVALIER DECREED THAT PEASANTS COULD NOT ENTER PORT AU PRINCE UNLESS SHOD. THIS DRACONIAN INCENTIVE TO SHOE SALES ENDED WITH HIS DEMISE SEVEN YEARS AGO.

2. THERE IS NO CENTRAL PURCHASING AGENCY AND SHOES FOR
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THE ARMED FORCES ARE USUALLY PURCHASED BY THE SERVICES FROM HAITIAN AGENTS OR SUPPLIERS IN THE U.S. THE ARMED FORCES APPEARS TO BE THE ONLY PART OF THE GOVERNMENT THAT BUYS SHOES AND IT BUYS THEM ONLY RARELY. MILITARY FOOTWEAR USUALLY IS PURCHASED FROM U.S. SOURCES. THE LARGEST KNOWN PURCHASE, APPROXIMATELY 2,000 PAIRS OF COMBAT BOOTS, WAS MADE SEVERAL YEARS AGO. THE GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY DOES NOT PURCHASE SHOES

FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. PARAMILITARY FORCES AND PRIVATE GUARDS BUY THEIR OWN SHOES. NO CHANGE IS EXPECTED.

3. THE FOLLOWING RESPONDS DIRECTLY TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED IN PARA 2 REFTEL.

A. WOULD BIDS FROM U.S. INDUSTRY BE WELCOMED?
-- MOST PURCHASES ARE SMALL AND NOT MADE ON A BID BASIS.

B. ORGANIZATION OR INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE FOR PURCHASES:
--COL. HENRI NAMPHY, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR LOGISTICS, QUARTIER GENERAL, PORT AU PRINCE, HAITI.

C. RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING TENDERS:
--TENDERS ARE NOT SOLICITED. THE BEST METHOD TO SELL TO THE ARMED FORCES IS TO SEND BROCHURES AND PRICE LISTS TO COL. NAMPHY.

D. FUTURE PURCHASES:
--THE EMBASSY KNOWS OF NO SHOE PURCHASES PLANNED BY THE GOH. JONES

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